

CRITICAL BUDGET ISSUES AFFECTING THE 2010 CENSUS, PART 2

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INFORMATION POLICY,
CENSUS, AND NATIONAL ARCHIVES
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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CRITICAL BUDGET ISSUES AFFECTING THE 2010 CENSUS, PART 2

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30, 2008

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INFORMATION POLICY, CENSUS, AND
NATIONAL ARCHIVES,
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:05 p.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Wm. Lacy Clay (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Clay and Yarmuth.

Staff present: Darryl Piggee, staff director/counsel; Jean Gosa, clerk; Alissa Bonner and Michelle Mitchell, professional staff members; Charisma Williams, staff assistant; Dorian Rosen, intern; Benjamin Chance and Molly Boyd, minority professional staff members; and John Cuaderes, minority senior investigator and policy advisor.

Mr. CLAY. Good morning. The Information Policy, Census, and National Archives Subcommittee will come to order.

Welcome to today's hearing entitled, "Critical Budget Issues Affecting the 2010 Census, Part 2."

Without objection, the Chair and ranking member will have 5 minutes to make opening statements followed by opening statements not to exceed 3 minutes by any other Member who seeks recognition.

Without objection, Members and witnesses may have 5 legislative days to submit a written statement or extraneous materials for the record.

I will begin with the opening statement.

As Congress considered the fiscal year 2008 budget 9 months ago, this subcommittee held a hearing to review the consequences of a continuing resolution on census operations. The issue then was whether the Census Bureau had special needs that would warrant an exemption or anomaly in the CR to address its unique circumstances.

Last year, due to inadequate funding, the Bureau reduced the scope of its dress rehearsal and canceled testing for other important census operations.

Today, we will examine the impact of a potential fiscal year 2009 CR on operational plans for the decennial census.

As the Bureau ramps up to the 2010 census, its annual budget will grow exponentially. It is critical that the Bureau have necessary funds to complete key census operations in fiscal year 2009.

Without sufficient resources, the Bureau will be unable to open local census offices in every Congressional District, hire personnel and, most importantly, they will not be able to conduct address canvassing. Delaying any of these operations will be detrimental to the decennial. Cancelling address canvassing will result in an incomplete and inaccurate master address file.

The master address file is the data base used to mail census forms to every household. If we start with an inaccurate master address file, census accuracy is doomed. We cannot afford to let this happen.

Let me thank all of our witnesses for appearing today, and I look forward to your testimony.

Since Mr. Turner is not here, then we will go into testimony right away. Let me start by introducing our witnesses.

First, we will hear from the Honorable Steven Murdock, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau and then from former Census Director, the Honorable Kenneth Prewitt. Next, we will hear from the Bureau's former Associate Director for Field Operations, Mr. Marvin Raines, and our final witness will be Dr. Glenn Himes, executive director of the MITRE Corp., Civilian Agencies Mission.

Thank you all for appearing before the subcommittee today and welcome.

It is the policy of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee to swear in all witnesses before they testify.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. CLAY. Let the record reflect that the witnesses answered in the affirmative.

I ask that each witness now give a brief summary of their testimony and please limit your summary to 5 minutes. Your complete written statement will be included in the hearing record.

Dr. Murdock, you may start us off.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Wm. Lacy Clay follows:]

WM. LACY CLAY
CHAIRMAN
INFORMATION POLICY, CENSUS AND NATIONAL ARCHIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE
OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 30, 2008
2154 RAYBURN HOB
"CRITICAL BUDGET ISSUES AFFECTING THE 2010 CENSUS – PART 2"

AS CONGRESS CONSIDERED THE FY 2008 BUDGET NINE MONTHS AGO, THIS SUBCOMMITTEE HELD A HEARING TO REVIEW THE CONSEQUENCES OF A CONTINUING RESOLUTION (CR) ON CENSUS OPERATIONS.

THE ISSUE THEN, JUST AS IT IS TODAY, WAS WHETHER THE CENSUS BUREAU HAD SPECIAL NEEDS THAT WOULD WARRANT AN EXEMPTION, OR ANAMOLY, IN THE CR TO ADDRESS ITS UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES.

LAST YEAR, AS A RESULT OF THE INITIAL CR, THE BUREAU REDUCED THE SCOPE OF ITS DRESS REHEARSAL AND CANCELLED TESTING FOR OTHER IMPORTANT CENSUS OPERATIONS.

TODAY WE WILL EXAMINE THE IMPACT OF A POTENTIAL FY 09 CONTINUING RESOLUTION (CR) ON OPERATIONAL PLANS FOR THE 2010 CENSUS.

AS THE BUREAU RAMPS UP TO THE 2010 CENSUS, ITS ANNUAL BUDGET WILL GROW EXPONENTIALLY. IT IS CRITICAL THAT THE BUREAU HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COMPLETE KEY CENSUS OPERATIONS IN FISCAL YEAR 2009.

WITHOUT AN EXEMPTION OR ANOMALY IN ANY CR THAT CONGRESS PASSES, THE BUREAU WILL BE UNABLE TO OPEN LOCAL CENSUS OFFICES IN EVERY CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, HIRE PERSONNEL AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONDUCT ADDRESS CANVASSING.

DELAYING ANY OF THESE OPERATIONS WILL BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE DECENNIAL. CANCELLING ADDRESS CANVASSING WILL RESULT IN AN INCOMPLETE AND INACCURATE MASTER ADDRESS FILE.

THE MASTER ADDRESS FILE IS THE DATABASE USED TO MAIL CENSUS FORMS TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD. IF WE START WITH AN INACCURATE MASTER ADDRESS FILE, CENSUS ACCURACY IS DOOMED. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO LET THIS HAPPEN.

I THANK ALL OF OUR WITNESSES FOR APPEARING TODAY AND LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR TESTIMONY.

STATEMENTS OF STEVEN H. MURDOCK, DIRECTOR, U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS; KENNETH PREWITT, CARNEGIE PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY AND FORMER DIRECTOR, U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS; MARVIN RAINES, FORMER ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR FIELD OPERATIONS, U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS; AND GLENN HIMES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CIVILIAN AGENCIES, THE MITRE CORP.

STATEMENT OF STEVEN H. MURDOCK

Mr. MURDOCK. Chairman Clay, ranking member, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to speak with you today on the critical budget issues affecting the 2010 decennial census.

You asked that my testimony focus primarily on the amount of funding required to ensure that no disruption occur to decennial operations in the event that we are forced to operate under a continuing resolution in fiscal year 2009 that begins October 1st. That is just 2 months from now, and it is a significant concern for us.

We have been working diligently to get the infrastructure in place to conduct the most accurate and complete census possible. We have made considerable progress toward that end in getting our field data collection automation contract on track and assuring that our other contracts are operating as expected.

All systems are on track for rolling out our early local census offices and for getting them staffed up for address canvassing. Our integrated communications program is moving forward on schedule. We are in the process of getting all of our partnership specialists in place to begin their outreach efforts, and all of these efforts are critical to a successful census.

However, without adequate funding, these plans cannot move forward. It is imperative that the Congress support the President's 2009 request for the Census Bureau.

A continuing resolution that freezes funding at levels of the previous year can present serious difficulties for the decennial census program. This is because, as you well know, our cyclical budget needs serially increase in the years leading up the decennial census and decline thereafter. Difficulties most often come up in years ending in nine and zero, the years before and during the decennial census.

By the end of fiscal year 2009, only 6 months will remain until census day, April 1, 2010. Clearly, operations and infrastructure not fully in place at that time would seriously compromise their operation.

The President's budget for the Census Bureau in fiscal year 2009 is more than two times the current funding level, at almost \$3.1 billion. This is compared with \$1.4 billion in fiscal year 2008.

Most of this increase is for implementation of the 2010 decennial census program, the cost of which nearly triples from \$1 billion in fiscal year 2008 to \$2.7 billion in fiscal year 2009. So, as you can see, a CR that freezes our budget at the fiscal year 2008 level would make it very difficult for the Census Bureau to conduct operations critical a successful 2010 census.

For example, by October 1, 2008, the Census Bureau must begin opening, equipping and staffing 150 early local census offices around the country that will serve as the field offices for managing address canvassing operations.

The early months of fiscal year 2009 are extremely critical to completing final development and testing of equipment and software to be used in address canvassing as well as the operations control systems that manage the entire operation.

Finally, we will also begin hiring partnership specialists in our core group of 680 field partnership specialists which we hope to have onboard by January 2009.

Communications activities such as support of the Partnership Program, creative development and testing, public relations development, the Census in School programs and outreach must continue.

Let me clear that we at the Census Bureau, the Department of Commerce and the administration more broadly are all aware of challenges that a multi-month continuing resolution would present to the 2010 census program. We are currently analyzing potential impacts and developing spend plans in case agreement has not been reached on such bills by the beginning of the upcoming fiscal year.

While we have not yet finalized this work, the administration understands the situation and is committed to ensuring that we have a successful, accurate census in 2010.

I will be happy to take any questions that you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Murdock follows:]



**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
STEVE H. MURDOCK
DIRECTOR
US CENSUS BUREAU**

Critical Budget Issues Affecting the 2010 Census – Part 2

**Before the House Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National
Archives of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**

30 July 2008

Chairman Clay, Ranking Member Turner, members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to speak with you today on the critical budget issues affecting the 2010 Decennial Census.

You asked that my testimony focus primarily on the amount of funding required to ensure that no disruption occur to decennial operations in the event that we are forced to operate under a Continuing Resolution in fiscal year 2009 that begins October 1. That is just two months from now and it is a significant concern for us.

We have been working diligently to get the infrastructure in place to conduct the most accurate and complete Census possible. We have made considerable progress toward that end in getting our major Field Data Collection Automation (FDCA) contract on track and assuring that our other contracts are operating as expected.

All systems are on track for rolling out our early Local Census Offices, and for getting them staffed up for Address Canvassing. Our Integrated Communications program is moving forward on schedule. We are in the process of getting all of our partnership specialists in place to begin their outreach efforts. All of these efforts are critical to a successful Census.

However, without adequate funding these plans cannot move forward. It is imperative that the Congress support the President's 2009 request for the Census Bureau. Passing our budget before the start of fiscal year 2009 would be the ideal outcome for the 2010 program, from a planning and execution perspective. A Continuing Resolution that freezes funding at levels of the previous year can present serious difficulties for the decennial census program. This is because, as you well know, our cyclical budget needs serially increase in years leading up to the decennial censuses and decline thereafter. Difficulties most often come up in years ending in 9 and 0, the years before and during the decennial census. By the end of fiscal year 2009, only six months will remain until Census Day, April 1 2010. Clearly, operations and infrastructure not fully in place at that time would seriously compromise other operations.

The President's budget for the Census Bureau in FY 2009 is more than two times the current funding level – at almost \$3.1 billion (\$233 million is for salaries and expenses programs and \$2.9 billion is for periodic censuses and programs). This is compared with \$1.4 billion in FY 2008. Most of this increase is for implementation of the 2010 Decennial Census Program, the cost of which nearly triples from \$1.0 billion in FY 2008 to \$2.7 billion in FY 2009. So, as you can see, a CR that freezes our budget at the FY 2008 level would make it very difficult for the Census Bureau to conduct operations critical to a successful 2010 Census.

For example, by October 1, 2008 the Census Bureau must begin opening, equipping, and staffing 150 early Local Census Offices around the country that will serve as the field offices for managing Address Canvassing operations. The early months of FY 2009 are extremely critical to completing final development and testing of equipment and software to be used in Address Canvassing, as well as the Operations Control System that will manage the entire operation. Finally, we will also begin adding partnership specialists to the core group hired in FY 2008, with 680 field partnership staff scheduled to be on board by January 2009. Communications activities such as support of the partnership program, creative development and testing, public relations development, the Census in Schools program, and research must continue.

Let me be clear that we at the Census Bureau, the Department of Commerce, and the Administration more broadly are all very aware of challenges that a multi-month continuing resolution would present to the 2010 Census program. While the Administration strongly urges the Congress to pass full-year appropriations bills within the spending levels requested by the President, we are currently

analyzing potential impacts and developing spend plans in case agreement has not been reached on such bills by the beginning of the upcoming fiscal year. While we have not yet finalized this work, the Administration understands the situation and is committed to ensuring we have a successful, accurate census in 2010.

I would be happy to take any questions you might have.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you so much, Dr. Murdock.
Dr. Prewitt, you may begin with your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF KENNETH PREWITT

Mr. PREWITT. Thank you, Congressman Clay.

I think that there is probably no hearing in the run-up to the census which is as critical as this one on the simple principle that no money, no census.

Money, I think, in this conversation has to mean three things: adequate money, timely money and flexible money. It is maximizing all three of those principles which we believe made the 2000 census successful.

I am going to talk a bit about the 2000 census because that is what I can offer to this conversation, what worked and what did not work in 2000.

It has been generally described as a very successful census, not by me. It is not my right to claim that. However, I would like to say the Bush administration, even though the census was conducted under the Clinton administration, the Bush administration, in the presence of Secretary Evans speaking before the Senate, described it as the most accurate census this Nation has ever conducted.

We take that as high praise from an administration that wasn't always, from a party that wasn't always in line with the way we were trying to do the census in 2000. But I just want to stress the way in which we think that happened.

Just like this census, before we really got started, we were under a lot of pressure. It was thought that we would not have a good census. We had enormous critical oversight not just by the subcommittee, of course, as it should have been, but also by the GAO, by the IG, by the Congressional Monitoring Board.

GAO, for example, had us as high risk, starting as early as 1997 and never took us off their high risk list.

In this environment, we did well. We reversed the decline in mail-back response rate, which was critical.

More importantly, we drove down the under-count. The number of missed persons was reduced dramatically from an earlier census, and we reduced the differential under-count. That is we counted proportionally, racial minorities, the unemployed, the less well educated, the undocumented much better than we ever had in previous censuses.

So I am happy to say, and Marvin Raines knows why it works because he was there making it work, that we are proud of what was accomplished in 2000.

The question is how did it happen, and it happened because the Congress really was on the mark with respect to the funding strategy: supplemental funding, emergency funding, certainly an anomaly on continuing resolutions.

As we know, governments frequently find themselves in the CR world, and you can't do a census, as the Director just said, under a CR that flat-funds you when things are wrapping up and as your own opening comment made clear.

We did not have that problem in 2000, and that made a huge difference. The Clinton administration put a lot of high level attention

to getting the census underway, but the U.S. Congress, including a Republican-controlled subcommittee, was equally engaged in making sure.

Now I don't want to gloss over problems, and we had problems in 2000.

You certainly have run into some difficulties getting ready for the 2010 census with the Harris thing and the management problems and so forth. We are all familiar with those. You have already had your hearings on that. But that is behind us.

The Director has a plan in place right now, but this plan can't happen without the three dimensions of funding I just mentioned: adequacy, timeliness and flexibility.

Flexibility is important. You are going to run into the unexpected, and you have to be able to move money around, to move personnel around to sort of deal with some of those unexpected circumstances.

I think a fact that is sometimes overlooked about the 2000 census is that, at the end of the day, we returned over \$300 million to the U.S. Treasury. We came in under budget. That is we produced a census, a good census on schedule and under budget. That would not have happened without really successful cooperation by the Congress.

So I compliment you on this hearing today. I will be delighted, of course, to answer questions, but I think your focus on the fact of what damage the flat funding could do as you enter the 2009 fiscal year is extremely important.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Prewitt follows:]

*Statement
Of
Honorable Kenneth Prewitt
PhD*

*Information Policy, Census and National Archives Subcommittee
Oversight and Government Reform Committee
Wednesday, July 30, 2008
2247 Rayburn HOB*

“Critical Budget Issues Affecting the 2020 Census Part-2”

Thank you Chairman Clay, Ranking Member Turner and Members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify today on the importance of reliable, steady funding for the Census Bureau to ensure a well-managed Decennial Census that can be as complete and accurate as is achievable.

During the 2000 Census, at the Bureau we coined the phrase “the largest peace time mobilization in American history” to convey the size, complexity and sensitivity of the decennial plan, not to mention the significance of the Constitutional mandate we undertake every ten years to ensure the fairest, most representative democracy. The decennial is the first step toward the competitive election system that clearly vests power in the hands of the American people. A flawed census ripples through democratic processes, public policy making, and the reliability of the picture we have of our nation. The Decennial, precisely because it is conducted only once every ten years, is particularly vulnerable to funding uncertainties -- especially in the 9th, 10th and 11th fiscal hours on the eve of the decennial launch. It is those uncertainties which motivate this hearing. My testimony will emphasize three principles:

Adequate Funding....Timely Funding....Flexible Funding

The Census Bureau is always asking itself three questions: – Is there enough money? Will we have it when we need it? Can we adjust, in real time, when we encounter what could not have been planned for?

Nearly a million temporary workers led by a professional staff of more than 5,000 Census career public servants were “mobilized” in 2000 and achieved the most complete count in our nation’s history. Indeed, Commerce Secretary Evans paid tribute to these professionals and his predecessors in the Clinton Administration in testimony before the U.S. Senate in March 2001 as he delivered the results of what he termed “...the most accurate census this nation has ever conducted.”

That achievement must be set in context, especially in light of the management challenges now facing the 2010 Census. Just over 90 days following my confirmation in late October 1998, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the plan for 2000 that had been in the making for almost a decade had to be scrapped. There was a great partisan divide over the census design between a Democratic White House and a Republican Congress, and, following the Court ruling, the career professionals went back to the drawing board and dramatically altered the decennial plan in the midst of intense partisan and press scrutiny. We faced highly critical oversight not only by Congress, the Commerce Inspector General, the General Accounting Office, but also a Census Monitoring Board and academic peer and stakeholder groups. Very few in these groups expressed much confidence in our ability to get the Census back on track. All the while the clock kept ticking towards our Constitutional deadline -- looming just 14 months away from the Supreme Court’s decision. As I recall, we were added to the GAO’s “High Risk” list of

government programs in 1997 and remained there through-out my entire tenure as Director and until we delivered the final numbers to Congress in 2001.

In this very challenging environment, we reversed an historical trend of declining response rates that went back three decades. Much of the credit for the success of Census 2000 was deservedly earned by the career government employees who innovated and accommodated in the face of these challenges and a ground-breaking national advertising, partnerships and promotion effort that was diverse and reached into every community, small and large, urban and rural.

But I want to stress to you today that this achievement was possible only because President Clinton and a Republican Congress came together in a crisis and provided us with full funding for our requests, provided it when it was needed, and built-in enough flexibility to deal with the unexpected – floods in North Carolina, schedule difficulties in Chicago, technical issues in data capture, fraud in Hialeah, Florida.

The President put his Deputy Chief of Staff in charge of working with the Congress to find common ground on a solution to the census crisis. The Congress granted us supplemental funding, emergency funding, and an “anomaly” in Continuing Resolutions. Indeed, the Congress even added to our requests for programs like the advertising and partnership efforts. Were it not for this bipartisan commitment to ensure the career professionals had all they needed to carry out their mission to measure America, we would not have reversed the decline in response rates; we would not have significantly reduced the differential undercount; and we would not have achieved the most complete census in American history. I need not emphasize to this knowledgeable Committee that the Congress shares in the credit for this achievement.

The support provided for the 2000 census met the three principles noted earlier. It was responsive to the Census Bureau requests. It arrived on a predictable schedule that matched the workflow. It allowed for enough flexibility to allow the Census Bureau to respond to the unexpected.

I am well aware of the current fiscal struggle between this White House and this Congress. I know it is likely that the Commerce Department will be part of a Continuing Resolution for at least part of Fiscal 2009. Therefore, I encourage you to prevail upon your colleagues in the Appropriations committees in the House and Senate to not insist on a request from the White House to exempt the Census Bureau from the flat line funding in a Continuing Resolution. The Congress can and should exercise the leadership to grant an exemption to the Census Bureau - whether or not it is requested. There is simply too much at stake to do otherwise.

In closing, I do not want to appear to gloss over the current management and contractor problems confronting my successors at Suitland. I am familiar with the scope of the problem as Secretary Guitierrez asked me to serve on his Expert Panel earlier this year to review and recommend a re-plan of the 2010 decennial design. I believe the 2010 census is at great risk of being only the second census in our history – the other being 1990 – that does not improve upon the prior census. However, I do have a great deal of confidence in the dedication and ingenuity of the career scientists, mathematicians, demographers, geographers and other professionals at the Bureau.

They mastered the challenge in 1999 and 2000, and I believe they can master it again today. Overlooked in the story of Census 2000 Mr. Chairman is another proud fact. At the end of the day, as we released the numbers to the Congress I was pleased to be able to send another document to the Congress. That was a letter to the relevant appropriation and authorizing committees of the House and Senate. We reported a surplus in excess of \$300 million taxpayer dollars. *The Census Bureau in 2000 delivered a good census on schedule and under budget.*

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I do not doubt that Congress will fund the Decennial Census. I do worry that the funding may not meet the other two principles so critical to a good census: timeliness and flexibility. It was Congressional faithfulness to the three funding principles that made for a good census in 2000, and will make for a good census in 2010.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you so much, Dr. Prewitt.
Mr. Raines, you may begin your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF MARVIN RAINES

Mr. RAINES. Chairman Clay, it is an honor and distinct pleasure to appear before you today to share my thoughts on the impact of a continuing resolution on the ability of local and regional staff to conduct a complete and accurate 2010 census.

My testimony today from the perspective gained during my tenure as Associate Director for Field Operations will hopefully provide context for your discussion and deliberations.

There are a number of issues that I feel should be addressed, but two are the most important for field operations. They are the importance of local census offices and the importance of reaching the hard to enumerate populations.

Any interruptions of funding, changes in resource or schedule modifications would negatively impact each of areas as well as others that are mentioned in my written testimony.

A local census office is one of the basic building blocks for all of field operations. Approximately 500 LCLs must be leased, furnished and staffed for the decennial census. The leasing process is essential, and the space must meet size, safety, transportation and local requirements to optimally satisfy the needs of each region.

After a lease is signed, each LCL may require three to 6 months to become field operational. Each office has electrical, telecommunications, security and special field infrastructure needs and must pass a comprehensive checklist prior to becoming and being declared operational.

A continuing resolution delaying the opening of LCLs would have a domino effect throughout all of field operations and would adversely impact the success of the 2010 census.

Another extremely important issue is addressing problems concerned with the historically under-counted. The most likely to be under-counted are minorities, the poor, individuals living in rural and urban areas, undocumented immigrants, the transient and homeless and children.

Those under-counted have been divided into two basic categories: hard to count and hardest to count. Typically the hard to count are those considered apathetic, uninformed, misinformed or disinterested in participating. The hardest to count are individuals with some barrier that prevents them from participating in the census such as those with language isolation or literacy challenges.

From my census 2000 experience, I learned that the Partnership Program is one of the most effective means of reaching the hard to count and the hardest to count. Groundwork, networks and trust must be established in challenging communities and reestablished in others to engage the right partner or community leader to join in efforts to count everyone.

In conclusion, I realize from firsthand experience that planning and implementing a decennial census is complex, time-consuming and rewarding.

However, in order to get to the part that is rewarding, you must endure and work through the complex, challenging and time-consuming parts. To do that, the Census Bureau staff needs adequate

resources and support to move completely into decennial operations and programs without delay.

As proud as I am of our work during the 2000 census, I am more proud of the quality and integrity of the data that was collected. The public deserves the Bureau's highest and best service, and local communities depend on the accuracy and completeness of that data.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope I was able to add another perspective to this hearing. I am available for questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Raines follows:]

Critical Budget Issues Affecting the 2010 Census – Part 2

***Testimony of Marvin D. Raines
Retired
Associate Director for Field Operations
U. S. Census Bureau***

***Perspectives from:
Census 2000***

**Information Policy, Census,
and National Archives Subcommittee**

**The Honorable William Lacy Clay, Chairman
Wednesday, July 30, 2008
2154 Rayburn HOB
2:00 P.M.**

Chairman Clay and other distinguished Members of the Sub-Committee – it is an honor and a distinct pleasure to appear before you today to share my thoughts on the impact of a Continuing Resolution or any other budgetary interruptions, on the ability of local and regional staff to conduct a complete and accurate 2010 Census.

My testimony, today, will hopefully provide context for your discussions and deliberations from the perspective gained during my tenure as Associate Director for Field Operations of the Census Bureau for Census 2000. As a point of reference, Field Operations, which include Regional Census Centers and Local Census Offices, as well as Headquarters Field staff all report to the Associate Director for Field Operations. My remarks focus on the interconnectivity of decennial operations and the impact on local governments, partners and stakeholders.

Census 2000

First, I am extremely proud to have been involved in the 2000 Census, considered the most successful Census in history. I had the privilege of working with dedicated career Bureau staff, talented temporary staff, and committed partners, stakeholders and government officials. These individuals worked under difficult circumstances that included the usual frustrations and challenges that accompany any decennial. Notwithstanding any of these issues, the 2000 Census was planned and implemented in a unique and productive manner.

We prided ourselves on conducting a Census campaign based upon a “ground-up” partnership strategy at all levels. Whether address canvassing, or recruiting, local census office management, the Partnership Program, or any of the other key operations – we engaged partners and stakeholders at all levels.

2010 Census Perspectives and Concerns

The decennial Census is one of two major acts of civic engagement that allows the American people to take an active role in the processes that directly impact their way of life. Every major part of their lives is touched through the act of completing the census questionnaire – from the schools their children attend, to the availability and access to public services; to political representation. Therefore, I still view the Bureau’s ability to perform well as a matter of great importance to state and local governments and to the general public.

Discussions that imply that the Census is far away and there is time to absorb any changes, or delays that may occur, and that the Bureau can still produce an accurate and complete count are simply not the case. The Census is the largest peace time mobilization in this Country with numerous moving parts that must be planned, tested

and implemented with precision for the overall decennial to be successful. The 2010 Census is underway and the “train has left the station”.

As Associate Director for Field Operations, whenever I thought of the decennial census, and the programs and operations, I automatically considered how our actions would impact the people we served. How does a local mayor in a rural town comply with our address canvassing and Local update of Census Addresses (LUCA) requirements? How do we better reach and motivate historically undercounted populations? What can be done to better assist Local Census Office (LCO) managers and their staffs perform amidst new procedures with untested enumerators? How do we identify and engage the most effective partners to reach the hardest to enumerate? I pondered these questions and many more with my Headquarters and regional staff in efforts to be more responsive to the folks at the local level – which is where the Census happens.

This may seem obvious but my testimony today will focus on the things that were important to me as Associate Director for Field Operations:

- ✓ **What is the importance of a Local Census Office (LCO) in conducting a successful Census?**
- ✓ **How do our actions at Headquarters impact local areas?**
- ✓ **How do we ensure a complete and accurate census?**
- ✓ **How do we reduce the differential undercount?**
- ✓ **How can we empower local partners and stakeholders to ensure a complete and accurate census in their community?**

These questions remain a concern for me today. Any interruption of funding, resource changes or schedule modifications would negatively impact each of these areas.

Let’s look briefly at the areas identified:

- ✓ **What is the importance of a Local Census Office (LCO) in conducting a successful Census?**

A Local Census Office is one of the basic building blocks for all of Field Operations. There are approximately 500 LCO’s that must be leased, furnished and staffed. The leasing process is essential and the space must meet size, safety, transportation and location requirements to optimally satisfy the need of each region. A 1-2 year lease for office space is usually more expensive and harder to find than longer length leases. During 2008, about a third of these offices must be opened to provide a working environment and facilities to meet the needs of address canvassing operations and to house LUCA materials submitted by local governments.

After a lease is signed, each LCO may require a lead time of 3 to 6 months or more to become Field operational. Each office has electrical, telecommunications, security, and special field infrastructure needs and must pass a comprehensive checklist prior to being declared operational. Once operational, the staff of each LCO must conduct a series of systems and equipment tests to ensure that payroll, personnel, and administrative systems work as planned. Office furniture, materials and supplies and maintenance support must be scheduled for each office before work can begin.

Now that the manner in which non-response follow-up will be conducted has changed, it will be more important than ever to ensure that each LCO meets new specifications required for this important operation. The LCO will also serve as the center for outreach and partnership activities for each local census area. Partnerships specialists will use the LCO to store census awareness materials, to serve as the center for establishing complete count committees, and to conduct other local community and government partnership activities.

Finally, each LCO must be configured to meet stringent operational specifications. Transportation, size, cost and location considerations require that the leasing process take place early enough to meet operational deadlines. Systems, furniture and materials must be scheduled for delivery to coincide with each LCO opening. A continuing resolution would be catastrophic and have a domino effect throughout all of Field Operations.

✓ **How do our actions at Headquarters impact local areas?**

When the Bureau develops decennial operations, strategies and programs they are tested and evaluated to ensure that all state and local governments are capable of complying. The effectiveness of a strategy and program is measured for application and consistency. Any delay or interruption of funding would impact state and local governments in ways that they may be unable to recover from. For example, delays in address canvassing increase the likelihood that other changes would be made to the operational schedule and therefore impact a local government's ability to participate. The growth and expansion that most towns and cities have experienced since Census 2000 means that address canvassing is even more important to ensure that questionnaires are sent to valid addresses.

Economic challenges, gas prices and the housing crisis have certainly impacted the living arrangements of many Americans and address canvassing and the Partnership Program are critical to the accuracy and completeness of the addresses, in such situations. Fuel prices and the housing crisis have also impacted the local tax base, which has squeezed local and state government budgets and staff. Therefore, the ability of these offices to take a more active role in many decennial operations is limited, and any Bureau changes or delays would be devastating for them.

✓ **How do we ensure a complete and accurate census?**

To ensure a complete and accurate census, decennial operations, key strategies and programs must be fully funded and work in concert at the headquarters, regional census center and local census offices to be most effective. The Census Bureau regional census centers and local census offices must recruit, hire and train thousands of staff. Background checks must be performed and training must be arranged and conducted. These may seem like simple tasks but they are far from simple or easy. Consider this, with approximately 500 LCOs and 12 regional census centers, thousands of people must be recruited, tested, interviewed and trained. Hundreds of suitable, free space must be secured to conduct testing and training. Trainers must be trained and thousands of pages of material must be printed before any of operation can begin. Adequate training and preparation is never an area that the Bureau compromises on and I'm sure they will not do so now.

I have briefly highlighted general tasks that must be performed prior to the start of any operation and each of these tasks is conducted by staff already in place. Partnership Specialists assist with recruiting, community awareness and are responsible for securing space for testing and training. Delays would impact the Partnership Program's ability to hire and training the Partnership Specialists needed to establish the infrastructure for a complete and accurate Census.

Likewise, local governments, partners and stakeholders must work together with local Census staff to identify the hard-to-enumerate areas and populations and implement an effective strategy specific to that community in order to be successful. Ensuring a complete and accurate census requires ongoing education, outreach and awareness of a community. Each community is different, with unique challenges and concerns that are addressed via local census office operations and Partnership Specialist strategies. In most cases, those issues and concerns must be focused on and planned for long before Census Day.

✓ **How do we reduce the differential undercount?**

Historically, there are segments of the population that have been undercounted. Traditionally, those most likely to be undercounted have been minorities, the poor, individuals living in rural and urban areas, undocumented immigrants, the transient and homeless and children. Those undercounted have been divided into two basic categories: a) **hard to count** and b) **hardest to count**. Typically, the **hard to count** are those considered apathetic, uninformed, misinformed or disinterested in participating. These individuals could be informed, educated and motivated to complete and return the questionnaire. The **hardest to count** are individuals with some barrier (s) that prevents them from participating in the census. For example, individuals with language isolation or literacy challenges; are hard to locate or those who do not wish to be counted for other reasons.

In the last ten years, our population has grown and individuals considered **hard to count** and **hardest to count** has also grown. We have become a more diverse Nation and since Sept. 11th, we have become a more protected and withdrawn society. To effectively reach these populations, the Census Bureau must be in a position to implement the most robust Partnership Program and Communications campaign possible. Individuals in these categories require more localized, community-based awareness, education and motivation efforts. The Bureau must be provided the resources needed in the timeframe recommended, to reduce the differential undercount.

From our Census 2000 experience, we learned that the Partnership Program is the most effective means of reaching the **hard and hardest to count**. Groundwork, networks and trust must be established in challenging communities and re-established in others to engage the "right" partner or community leader to join in efforts to count everyone. Although the Bureau will hire indigenous individuals as Partnership Specialists, the number of new communities and isolated groups has grown since 2000, thus requiring more time and resources to be effective.

The Communications Contractors need time to prepare materials, reproduce and distribute materials for Partnership Specialists, partners, stakeholders and local Complete Count Committees. Any interruption in resources would have a devastating impact on the efforts of those working in **hard and hardest to count** areas. The outreach, education and motivation processes are time consuming, time sensitive and necessary to change behavior.

Regional Census Centers and LCO staff depends heavily upon the productivity of Partnership Specialists who would be severely challenged by any funding delays. The current Partnership Program staff is small but the workload and performance requirements do not change. The Bureau's inability to hire additional Partnership Specialists could very well be an insurmountable circumstance. Time is the independent, uncontrollable variable that impacts every operation, strategy and program that is exacerbated by delays.

✓ **How can we empower local partners and stakeholders to ensure a complete and accurate census in their community?**

During Census 2000, the Census Bureau successfully engaged over 140,000 partners to ensure a complete and accurate census count in their communities. As phenomenal as that is, it demonstrates two important things:

- ✓ Local communities, leaders, and organizations were willing to join and initiate efforts to get a complete count. And
- ✓ Census Bureau's ability to communicate a consistent Census message that local communities could take ownership of and promote.

As concerns and issues about the 2010 Census are discussed in the media, the public will become increasingly wary of the overall census process and the accuracy and credibility of the data. State and local governments, local partners and stakeholders must have confidence in the decennial process and the Bureau's ability to conduct a complete and accurate Census in their communities. The Census Bureau needs the adequate resources and the time needed to engage the community in ways necessary to ensure an accurate and complete count. Public trust is a concern of local partners and stakeholders and should be a concern of everyone.

Any funding shortfalls and subsequent time delays would leave the Bureau and the Nation with a critical and necessary "product" (2010 Census) that the public does not trust, and without trust the Census is doomed. No amount of money or advertising can overcome "distrust of the product" within sixteen months. Trust is built through other sources that believe in the "product". For that level of trust to be shared, the Bureau's partners and stakeholders must be confident that the 2010 Census is on schedule and local assistance is available to them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I realize, from first hand experience that planning and implementing a decennial Census is complex, time consuming and rewarding. However, in order to get to the part that is rewarding, you must endure and work through the complex, challenging and time consuming parts. To do that, the Census Bureau staff needs adequate resources and support to move completely into decennial operations and programs without interruptions.

As proud as I am of our work during the 2000 Census, I am more proud of the quality and integrity of the data that was collected. The public deserves the Bureau's highest and best service and local communities depend upon the accuracy and completeness of that data.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope I was able to add another perspective to this hearing. I am available for questions.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you so much, Mr. Raines. You do bring an interesting perspective to the hearing.

Dr. Himes, you may finish off the testimony.

STATEMENT OF GLENN HIMES

Mr. HIMES. Good afternoon, Chairman Clay, and thank you for the opportunity you have given to the MITRE Corp. to update the committee on the impact of a continuing resolution on operational plans for the 2010 decennial census.

The MITRE Corp. is a not for profit organization chartered to work in the public interest. MITRE manages three federally funded research and development centers: one for the Department of Defense, one for the Federal Aviation Administration and one for the Internal Revenue Service.

Governed by Part 35.017 of the Federal Acquisition Regulations, federally funded research and development centers operate in the public interest with objectivity, independence, freedom from conflict of interest and full disclosure of their affairs to the respective government sponsors.

It continues to be our privilege to serve with the talented engineers and other professionals who support the Census Bureau in its efforts to prepare and conduct the 2010 decennial census.

We are pleased to report that since MITRE's last appearance before this committee on June 11th, the Bureau has demonstrated continued improvements in managing and overseeing preparations for the 2010 decennial census. These improvements include an increase in activities to monitor program progress and to identify potential risks.

Some of the highest risks to achieving a successful decennial census pertain to funding. If funding for the decennial census is delayed or insufficient, critical activities may be delayed or reduced in scope. Delays would increase the risk of accomplishing the census on time. Reductions in scope would increase the risk that the quality of the census data would not meet the needs of Congress or the American people.

Finally, insufficient funding would require census managers and executives to perform substantial replanning and reprioritizing at a time when their workloads will be growing enormously. We remain committed to helping the Census Bureau prepare for a successful 2010 Decennial.

Thank you for inviting us to this hearing. I will be happy to answer your questions.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you so much, Dr. Himes.

Director Murdock, please tell the subcommittee what will happen if the Bureau does not receive adequate for fiscal year 2009 and what operations will be affected.

Mr. MURDOCK. Let me summarize some of those because there are many operations that are impacted. Among the majors of those, of course, is address canvassing which we must open our local offices in order for that to be successful.

It is hard to overemphasize the importance of address canvassing. In many ways the census is a census of addresses from which we get households from which we get the population that we count

for the decennial census. That particular operation, therefore, is critical.

If you do not have a good address canvassing, you are not likely not to have a good census. So that would be the first major operation that would be impacted.

Also impacted and very importantly would be our Partnership Program which, as you know, has been important in terms of reaching the very populations that Mr. Raines referred to, the hard to count populations.

We are scheduled to have 680 such specialists in place by the beginning of next year. We now have 120. So we would be in the process of hiring another 560 in this interim period of time. Much of that would occur after the beginning of fiscal year 2009.

There are certainly many others. We have contracts ongoing for the operation or control systems, contracts for the handhelds that will be used in the address canvassing. Nearly all of our major contracts would be negatively impacted, meaning nearly all of our subsequent operations related to the 2010 census would be negatively impacted.

So virtually all of our ongoing programs would be impacted and, as indicated, certainly the opening of those local census offices would be critical. That would not occur without those finances.

Mr. CLAY. That would have a detrimental effect on having an accurate count.

Mr. MURDOCK. Yes.

Mr. CLAY. Let me followup with Dr. Himes on that.

MITRE has done some consulting for the Bureau. Your work has been helpful in ensuring that proper attention is given to key operations.

We have heard from Dr. Murdock what could happen if the Bureau does not get adequate funding for the census. Now I would like to get your opinion. What are the implications of not conducting the operations Dr. Murdock cited?

Mr. HIMES. So we would concur with what Dr. Murdock, that the address canvassing is really one of the key starting points of having a successful, accurate census.

MITRE's involvement has been especially focused on FDCA, the Field Data Collection Automation, in recent months. The contracts to complete the infrastructure, to open the local census offices, to complete the handheld computers, the software, the testing, the training could all impacted by this.

FDCA alone has a substantial increase in funding from 2008 to fiscal year 2009, and obviously, there are other parts of the census activities as a whole that Dr. Murdock also referred to.

So if they are not able to hire the people and complete the systems to support them, there would most likely be a delay or they would have to reduce the number of offices that they opened, and that would then have a very deleterious effect on the quality of the data.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you for that response.

Mr. Raines, what is the most critical problem facing regional staff?

Mr. RAINES. I don't know if I can actually characterize it as one problem, but there are a number of different issues. All of them, I think, are associated with timeliness.

Clearly, now that the new procedure that is one that will involve pen and paper is going to be used, I like to refer to the testing as there is a zero gremlin out there somewhere. When I say zero gremlin, what I am talking about, I remember when we did testing during the 2000 census.

We could try things out for 100 people or 100 cases or 1,000 cases, 10,000 cases. But somewhere between 10,000 and 100,000, the zero gremlin would get in there and create problems, and we would have problems. When we got 100,000 cases, somehow things would just begin to get problems. So testing is going to be one the major problems.

Recruiting and the competency of staff is another one of those issues. Being able to have funding so that we can recruit the proper staff and the competency of that staff is extremely important.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you for that.

Gremlin was a make of a car, I believe.

Mr. RAINES. Well, I am talking about that imaginary person that gets in there and causes concerns. [Laughter.]

Mr. CLAY. Thank you for that response.

Mr. Prewitt, you are to be commended for the success of the 2000 census, and you stated that the Census Bureau returned \$300 million to the U.S. Treasury. I am not sure if that is going to happen for 2010.

On a serious note, you talk about the proportional under-count. With the limited time we have, let me ask you, was the proportional under-count consistent in all demographic groups? Did it go across the board and then how did you determine there was an over-count and an under-count?

Mr. PREWITT. Right. Very important, Mr. Chairman, and I will do this quickly. We assessed the magnitude of the under-count two different ways in 2000. One is what is called demographic analysis, and the other was an accuracy and coverage evaluation.

Demographic analysis doesn't allow you to make fine grain decisions about the nature of the under-count, but the coverage evaluation survey did.

What we learned in 2000 is that with exception of the Black population, all other racial groups were almost taken to zero. That is the American Indian group, the Hispanic and the Asian population groups, but the African American population was taken down close to 1 percent under-count. That is from a historic high of 5 percent earlier in the decade.

We have been progressively doing better on the under-count but not the differential under-count, and 2000 is the first census where we made real cutting into the differential under-count.

We only knew that because we did a large followup survey called the Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation Survey which allowed us to measure the magnitude of how well we had done on the differential under-count.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you for that response.

Mr. Yarmuth is recognized.

Mr. YARMUTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one question.

Dr. Prewitt, when you had to prepare for the 2000 census in a relatively time because of the Supreme Court decision, how would you evaluate how important funding was in the years leading up to the census as opposed to the actual year of the census?

Mr. PREWITT. Well, you are quite right. We had a bad patch. When I got there, we weren't clear what kind of census we can do. We didn't even know for the first 4 or 5 months what kind of census design we would have.

So enormous work had to happen after the Supreme Court decision to reconfigure the apparatus around what we call the traditional census.

However, what we did not have to deal with were the kind of problems that the Director and Marvin Raines just discussed. The local offices were open. We were staffing them up. We had an advertising campaign that was ready to go. We had hired the partners.

All of the kind of apparatus we needed to make the new design work was in place. We had a lot of design work to do, but we did not have a staffing up preparation.

This is a much worse situation. A flat funding in fiscal year 2009 of even for 3 or 4 or 5 months is a much worse situation than what we had in 2000 with the Supreme Court delay.

Mr. YARMUTH. I think that is what we are all concerned about. We are really in a very critical juncture right now, that what we do now will affect the integrity of the census in 2010. It is clear that we need to make sure that there are adequate resources right now.

Mr. PREWITT. Yes. The issue is timeliness more than the amount right now.

Mr. YARMUTH. Thank you. That is all, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you, Mr. Yarmuth.

I saw Dr. Himes with this curious look on his face when the bells were going off. The bells announced the beginning of a series of votes.

So we will conclude this hearing. It will probably be one of the shortest in the history of this institution. But I would like to make one final point before concluding.

As Chair of this subcommittee, I am committed to ensuring that there is adequate funding in fiscal year 2009 for the Census Bureau to carry out effective and efficient operations for the 2010 decennial census, and I am working with the House leadership to bring this to fruition.

It is the expectation of this subcommittee that we will have the full and complete cooperation of the administration, the Commerce Department and the Census Bureau. This includes being honest with Congress about operational problems and funding needs before they become catastrophes.

Director Murdock, I trust that we can count on you and your team to fulfill this obligation.

Mr. MURDOCK. Absolutely, Mr. Chairman, and we are very grateful for your efforts on behalf of the Census Bureau.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you so much.

Mr. Yarmuth, if you have any closing remarks.

Mr. YARMUTH. Just that I appreciate all your work and your testimony. It is something that we need to get right, and I appreciate your input into the discussion.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you so much.

Without objection, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:34 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

